



**NORTH DAKOTA**  
DEPARTMENT *of* HEALTH

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## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release:  
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### **Supply of Influenza Vaccine Limited in North Dakota** *State Health Department Working With Public and Private Partners on Vaccine Shortage*

BISMARCK, N.D. – North Dakota has received about one-half of the influenza vaccine ordered in the state this year, according to State Medical Officer Craig Lambrecht, M.D., of the North Dakota Department of Health.

A statewide survey of public and private health-care providers conducted last week indicated that about 77,000 doses of Aventis and FluMist® vaccine had been received, with about 27,000 not yet delivered. In addition, about 42,000 doses of Chiron vaccine had been ordered but will not be received.

The survey also indicated that some areas of the state have very little vaccine in private clinics, hospitals or local public health units. In addition, 11 counties reported no vaccine: Adams, Dunn, Hettinger, Logan, McHenry, McKenzie, McLean, Pierce, Ransom, Renville, and Towner.

“We are very concerned about the shortage of vaccine in North Dakota this flu season,” Lambrecht said. “Unfortunately, some people can develop severe complications from influenza. That’s why we need to do everything possible to ensure that the most vulnerable of our citizens have access to the available vaccine.”

The North Dakota Department of Health is working with physicians, hospitals, clinics and local public health units across the state to address the vaccine shortage, to consider focusing initial vaccination efforts on certain high-risk groups and to determine if redistribution to areas with no vaccine is feasible. In addition, the state health department is asking private businesses that ordered vaccine for their employees to call the Division of Disease Control at 701.328.2378 if they are willing to redistribute vaccine to shortage areas in the state.

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Because of the limited supply of vaccine, health officials are asking healthy North Dakotans to forgo a flu shot this year.

“We have a long tradition in North Dakota of pulling together and helping our neighbors in need,” Lambrecht said. “I’m confident that North Dakotans will do the same when faced with this year’s vaccine shortage. If you are healthy, save the vaccine for a friend, family member, child or neighbor who may need it more.

“Furthermore, health-care providers in North Dakota have traditionally supported health department recommendations. This year, we are asking providers not to immunize patients who are not identified by the high-risk criteria. This will help to facilitate redistribution of vaccine to those areas of the state with limited supply,” Lambrecht said.

The North Dakota Department of Health also is urging everyone to practice good respiratory hygiene throughout the upcoming influenza season.

“We all need to keep our germs to ourselves,” Lambrecht said. “In fact, the best ways to stop the spread of influenza are by covering your nose and mouth when you sneeze or cough, washing your hands often, and staying home if you are sick.”

For more information about the influenza vaccine shortage in North Dakota, contact Larry Shireley, state epidemiologist, at 701.328.2378.

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